SOF/USMC Interoperability

Briefing to CEAB

December 3, 2003

Issue/ Lessons Learned

Issue:

- Provide enhanced communications capability that will enhance the interoperability of USMC and SOF.

Lessons Learned

- Inability to share critical information and time sensitive information with Theater Special Operations Forces.
- Inability to transmit, plan, and coordinate utilizing imagery, data voice, and satellite communications (wide & narrow band) simultaneously with SOF in supported and supporting roles.

SOF COMMUNICATIONS

- Multi-Use Communications System (MUCS)
  - Used for in-flight communications/shipboard communications
  - Two individually boxed components comprise system; MUCS Box and "Brain Box"
- MUCS Communications Box
    - Built around 2x PRC-117F tactical radios
    - UHF/VHF/AM/FM/SAT/LOS Voice or Data nets
    - 30-512 MHz capable; 12 or 16 KB crypto
  - Panasonic Toughbook/IBM laptop
    - HPW (High Performance Waveform) capability
    - Harris proprietary interface with Outlook
    - Imagery/text/email capable
  - Weight: 180 lbs
- "Brain Box"
  - Single channel communications run through one interface
  - One operator can monitor up to 8 nets (4 MUCS boxes)
  - ICS setup for ease of use
  - Weight: 230 lbs.

SOF COMMUNICATIONS

- Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB) System
  - Shipboard/Forward Locations communications package
  - AFSB Communications Box:
    - Built around 1x PRC-117F tactical radio
    - UHF/VHF/AM/FM/SAT/LOS Voice or Data nets
    - “Brain Box” compatible
    - 30-512 MHz capable; 12 or 16 KB crypto
  - Panasonic Toughbook/IBM laptop
    - HPW (High Performance Waveform) capability
    - Harris proprietary interface with Outlook
    - Imagery/text/email capable
  - Weight: 130 lbs

- System Benefits
  - Allows for operators to utilize multiple communications pathways at one time to ensure redundancy.
  - Common components ensure ease of maintenance and upkeep.
  - Provide global secure imagery/text/email transfer.
  - Commercial, off-the-shelf technology utilized.
  - Proven rugged, flexible system.

Way Ahead

- Determine if needed or what is needed
- Research
  - Talking to units (USMC &SOF)
  - Component Comparisons
    - What portions of the components are currently available?
    - Is there package requirements?
  - Who needs and when
    - Near Term (Urgent)
      - Procure components necessary to support OIF
    - Mid Term
      - Determine requirements to support MEUs (East and West Coast) and procure
    - Far Term
      - Procure requirements to support MEFs
  - Identify dollar requirement
- UNS Development